



## Update from Congressman NEIL ABERCROMBIE

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### FAQs

**Can I get Avian Flu from eating infected poultry or eggs?** In general, scientists do not think you can get Avian Flu from eating infected poultry or eggs.

**Can I get Avian Flu from working with/around poultry?** Exposure to infected poultry and their droppings has been associated with human infection; however, this is a rare occurrence.

**Is it safe to travel to countries that have reported cases of Avian Flu infection?** To date, the World Health Organization

Dear Friend:

This year's flu season could be one of the worst ever recorded. With the possibility of the Avian Flu (H5N1), otherwise known as the bird flu, looming around the world we need to be ready. Seasonal influenza kills up to 40,000 people, and hospitalizes approximately 200,000 people in the United States each year.

As you may have heard in the news recently, health experts worldwide warn of an emergence of a new severe strain of the flu virus which people have no protection against.

Several cases of the bird flu have been confirmed in Asia and most recently in Europe and Russia. The virus strain has not yet mutated to a point where it could spread from human to human, but the potential is there.

The risk from bird flu is generally low to most people, because the virus occurs mainly among birds and does not usually infect humans. However, during an outbreak of bird flu among poultry (domesticated chicken, ducks, turkeys), there is a possible risk to people who have contact with infected birds or surfaces that have been contaminated with waste from infected birds.

Below is information that I believe will be helpful in protecting you and your family during this upcoming flu season.

Sincerely,

Neil Abercrombie

(WHO) has not advised any travel restrictions. When visiting affected countries, avoid farms and live poultry and birds, and adopt good hygiene practices.  
[www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel)

**Can my pets (cats, dogs) contract Avian Flu?** To date there is no known case of dogs catching or spreading Avian Flu. There is evidence that cats can catch Avian Flu, but it is not certain that they can pass it to humans.

**Can my doctor/healthcare provider test for Avian Flu?** To date, there is no routine test for Avian Flu.

**Can Avian Flu live on everyday surfaces like clothes, telephones, door handles, toys, grocery carts, etc?** Some reports suggest Avian Flu can live on a variety of surfaces for several days. Make sure to clean and

Member of Congress

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## What you need to know about the Avian Flu (H5N1)

### What is the flu?

Influenza, also called the flu, is caused by a virus. Every year a flu virus infects people around the world. This flu is a yearly or seasonal, event. In the United States the flu season begins in late December and ends in March, killing about 36,000 people (approximately 250,000-500,000 worldwide). Typically, the seasonal flu is most dangerous for the very young, the very sick and the very old. Avian Flu would affect everyone and not just at risk groups.

### What is the bird flu (H5N1)?

Bird flu is an infection caused by the avian (bird) influenza (flu) virus. This flu virus occurs naturally among birds. Wild birds worldwide carry the virus in their intestines, but usually do not get sick from them. However, bird flu is very contagious among birds and can make some domesticated birds, including chickens, ducks, and turkeys, very sick and kill

### Symptoms

At first, you cannot tell the difference between H5N1 and seasonal flu symptoms. H5N1 symptoms are the same as seasonal flu:

- Fever
- Cough
- Fatigue
- Body Ache

Human H5N1 cases have usually started very suddenly with:

- Fever (102°-104°) lasting 3-4 days
- Headache
- Severe muscle aches
- General weakness/extreme fatigue

These symptoms are accompanied by :

- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose

Stomach or intestinal symptoms (nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea) are

<p>sterilize your work and living areas and wash your hands frequently during the day. Avoid touching your mouth, nose or eyes.</p> <p><b>Will my annual flu shot (vaccine) protect me against Avian Flu?</b> No. Your yearly flu vaccination will not provide protection against Avian Flu.</p>	<p>them.</p> <p><b>Why is a pandemic flu deadlier than the seasonal flu?</b></p> <p>Pandemic flu is caused by a new virus, one to which humans have not been exposed in a very long time (probably not within the lifetime of anyone living). Pandemic flu spreads rapidly and is seen worldwide. Pandemic flu infects large numbers of people of all ages and causes serious illness and death.</p> <p><b>Is there treatment for bird flu?</b></p> <p>H5N1 can be treated with antiviral drugs, which require a <b>doctor's prescription</b>. The vaccine against seasonal flu will not protect against H5N1.</p> <p>While there is currently no vaccine available for the Avian Flu virus, the CDC suggests people of all ages receive a seasonal flu vaccine because it can potentially limit the disease's spread.</p>	<p>much more common in children than adults.</p> <p><b>You should see a healthcare provider or go to an emergency room immediately if you or your child have any of the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Severe or prolonged symptoms (10 days or more)</li> <li>• Difficulty breathing; rapid/painful breathing</li> <li>• Bluish skin</li> <li>• Return of fever or cough</li> <li>• Dehydration</li> <li>• Cough with yellow mucus or saliva</li> <li>• Confusion</li> <li>• Severe or persistent vomiting</li> <li>• Worsening of a serious medical condition.</li> <li>• Speak with your healthcare provider before the flu season starts.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What can you do to protect you and your family?</b></p>		
	<p><b>Cover Your Cough and Sneeze</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue.</li> <li>• Put your tissue in the trash can.</li> <li>• If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Keep Your Distance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid crowds.</li> <li>• Limit your travel, if possible.</li> <li>• Travel to and from work during off-peak hours, if possible.</li> <li>• Work from home, if possible.</li> </ul> <p><b>For more information contact one of the following agencies:</b></p>

	<p><b>Wash Your Hands</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wash hands with warm, soapy water for at least 10-15 seconds OR use a hand sanitizer after:</li> <li>• Coughing or sneezing.</li> <li>• Using the bathroom.</li> <li>• Caring for a sick person.</li> <li>• Handling garbage or animal waste.</li> </ul> <p><b>Keep Living and Work Areas Clean</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean areas with household detergents (dishwashing liquid, laundry detergent, hand soap).</li> <li>• Sanitize surfaces with bleach or alcohol.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: (800)-311-3435 or <a href="http://www.cdc.gov">www.cdc.gov</a></li> <li>• Hawaii State Department of Health: (808) 984-8200 or <a href="http://www.hawaii.gov/health">www.hawaii.gov/health</a></li> <li>• U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: (877)-696-6775 or <a href="http://www.hhs.gov">www.hhs.gov</a></li> <li>• World Health Organization (WHO): (202)-974-3000 or <a href="http://www.who.int">www.who.int</a></li> </ul>
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